4-24-69

Dear Harold,

Got your letter of 3/21 today -- mail delivery sure has improved lately.

As far as I know, Palmer is not based in Chicago. I may be wrong about that, but I think his column originates in Washington.

I'm enclosing the original arrest report on Thomas Vallee. I got it from the Criminal Court Bldg. His whole file can be copied if you feel it's necessary. I didn't see much that was interesting other than this and a letter from his probation officer. I was going to talk to the probation officer this week, but won't have time to and I'll have to postpone it until next week. There's something odd about his being terminated in the supervision, and the only way to clear it up is to talk to the officer. There's something strange about the arrest report. Look at #9. That's for aliases. Ml Rifle is hardly an alias. His attorney was Peter Georges from the fim of Giannis, Giannis & Georges. I know nothing about this firm, but I will be meeting with my draft lawyer this week and I'll find out what he knows about them.

On the subject of Malcolm, I think your reaction is pretty much a standard reaction. The unfortunate part of reading the Autobiography is that it's very incomplete. Haley, despite the many things he says to pat himself on the back, was neither sympathetic with nor understanding of Malcolm's position. When they began to write it Malcolm was still with Elijah Muhammed -- in fact, it was originally dedicated to Muhammed. Most of Malcolm's thinking changed in the last year of his life, the most radical changes occuring in the last three months. He didn't like much of what had been written in the beginning, but Haley at this point had tired of rewriting the mss. So that a proper understanding of Malcolm's position cannot be gained from the Autobiography, and in fact, it's necessary to go to many sources: speeches, interviews in magazines, radio programs, letters, etc. Much of what I know about his thinking came from things I've heard from people who were connected with his organization in one way or another. One fine example of how much his thinking changed was about a month before his assassination when he was in Selma to give a speech, he leaned over to Mrs. Martin Luther King and said, "Maybe if America is given a simple choice between me and Martin they'll choose Martin's way." So he was beginning at that time to see himself as a means of aiding King. His position on inter-marriage had turned around completely from that stated in the middle of the Autobiography. What has happened, though, is that many of the Black militants have read his early speeches and are basing their thoughts and actions on the philosophies expressed by him while his outlook was still very narrow. The man who sat down with Nkhruma & brought the United States before the United Nations once was not the same man who once said that putting cream in a cup of coffee was an illustration of integration. It's unfortunate that it's necessary to go to so many different sources to get a full understanding of what he was about. If you have a chance, though, it might be worthwhile to pick up a book called "The Last Year of Malcolm X" by George Breitman, published by Schocken. It's dull reading, but documents

many of these changes in Malcolm's thinking.

I don't find it surprising that he was taken in by Muhammed. I lived in the ghetto in Newark, New Jersey for quite a while, and I found that what counts in the ghetto is results. If you're talking to a ghetto hustler and trying to convince him that you're right, you've got to show him some positive results from your philosophy. And of course to this day Muhammed has more concrete results to point to than anyone else. His rehabilitation program for junkies is phenomenal. Look at how many people have been taken in by Billy Graham. I think that what matters most is that Malcolm had sense enough to realize how wrong Muhammed was, and to change his thinking completely.

Now, of course, you may have a different definition of "fascist" than I do. His stated political position at the end of his life was socialistic, which was why the Militant Labor Forum always gave him a platform to speak from. Well, at any rate, these are all very complicated issues and better discussed in person; perhaps we'll have an opportunity to do so this summer.

Which brings to mention that I've finally worked out my differences with the management of Radio TV Reports, and by the end of June Lita and I are going to New York. They want me to work there and perhaps flit around to the other offices periodically. I'm going to try it just until September, I doubt that I'll stay there much longer than that because I don't like New York.

The State Appeals Board voted against my conscientious objector claim, three to nothing. I've got a pretty good trick up my sleeve, though. I've got to examine my file tomorrow and see if they've denied their illegal action in my case. If they haven't denied it, my attorney's going to examine the possibility of bringing the Justice Department in to investigate them, meantime getting an injunction to prevent them from moving any further on me until the investigation is over with. As far as we know it's never been done before.

I'm sending along an article on King that I forgot to mail, and an article on the raiding of the Haitian training camp. I'd like the Haitian article back, as I don't have another copy of it.

Still haven't heard from Simon & Schuster. Been a long time now.

I'll close for now. Write you the end of the week if I find out anything more about the law firm that represented Vallee.

Say hello to Lillian for us.

Best,

Russ